



**A MANAGERIAL MODEL OF SOCIAL
PARTNERSHIP IN A PRESCHOOL EDUCATION
ORGANIZATION: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING,
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE
INDICATORS**

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ABSTRACT

The article presents a managerial model of social partnership for a preschool education organization that is intended for practical use by directors and methodologists. The model is based on the analysis of international research on family engagement and collaborative governance and on the policy framework of Uzbekistan. It includes a typology of partners built through stakeholder mapping, a four-phase management cycle, a set of principles for working with families as the core strand of partnership, directions of cross-sector cooperation (health services, primary schools, the local community and business), and a three-level system of performance indicators. The conditions of implementation and the typical risks are analyzed, and the role of professional development of preschool managers is substantiated. The proposed model is flexible and can be adapted to state and non-state, urban and rural preschool organizations.

Introduction

The quality of preschool education is determined not only by what happens inside the group room. A substantial body of research has demonstrated that the connections among home, educational institution and community are associated with positive outcomes for children, including better attendance, social-emotional adjustment and academic progress [1]. A meta-analysis of studies on parental involvement confirmed a positive association between involvement and children's achievement, while also showing that the strength of this association



depends on the form that involvement takes [2]. Experimental work on structured parent engagement in early childhood programs has likewise reported benefits for early language and literacy [3]. For the manager of a preschool organization, these findings translate into a practical question: how should partnership with families and the social environment be organized so that it is not a sequence of unrelated events but a managed system?

In Uzbekistan the question has acquired particular urgency. The Law "On Preschool Education and Upbringing" [4] and Presidential Decree No. PP-4312 of 8 May 2019 [5] initiated a period of rapid expansion of the network of preschool organizations, the development of non-state provision and an increase in the role of parents and local communities. Rapid growth makes it necessary to ensure that new and existing organizations not only provide places but also create an educational environment supported by the family and the community. At the same time, the managers of many organizations do not have ready-made tools for planning and evaluating partnership. They often rely on traditional forms such as parent meetings and holiday events, whose contribution to the quality of education is difficult to measure.

The aim of the article is to propose a managerial model of social partnership that can be used at the level of an individual preschool organization. The tasks are: to identify the conceptual bases of the model; to propose a method of identifying and classifying partners; to describe the management cycle and the principles of family engagement; to outline the main directions of cross-sector cooperation; to develop a system of performance indicators; and to analyze the conditions and risks of implementation.

2. Conceptual Background

The model rests on several theoretical foundations. Epstein's framework of overlapping spheres of influence argues that the family, the educational institution and the community influence the child together, and that educators can deliberately create conditions for this influence to be consistent [6]. The framework distinguishes six types of involvement, namely parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community, which can serve as a checklist for planning. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory provides a developmental explanation: the child grows within a system of interrelated environments, and the links between environments, for example between home and kindergarten, are themselves important for development [7].

Research on the determinants of parental involvement shows that parents become involved when they believe that participation is part of their role, when they feel capable of helping their child and when they perceive that the institution and the child invite and welcome their participation [8]. This has an important implication: the main lever of engagement lies largely in the hands of the institution, because it is the institution that creates invitations, atmosphere and opportunities. Another critical factor is trust. Studies of relational trust in educational institutions have demonstrated that respect, competence, personal regard and integrity in everyday relations are preconditions for improvement efforts [9]. Finally, the dual capacity-



building framework asserts that effective partnership requires investment in the capabilities of both staff and families, and cannot be achieved by asking only one of the sides to change [10].

From the management sciences, the model borrows the stakeholder approach, which considers an organization as being embedded in a network of groups with different interests, and which gives a systematic way to identify and prioritize them [11]. The classification of stakeholders according to power, legitimacy and urgency [12] is particularly useful for a manager with limited time. The process dimension is provided by collaborative governance research, which emphasizes facilitative leadership, trust building, shared understanding and the achievement of small early results as drivers of successful collaboration [13]. These elements are used below to design the management cycle.

3. Methods

The study used the analysis and synthesis of scholarly literature and normative documents, comparison of theoretical approaches, and the method of conceptual modeling. The model was developed through several steps: identification of the components of effective partnership in the literature; their adaptation to the conditions of a preschool organization in Uzbekistan; formulation of the stages and instruments of the management cycle; and development of a system of indicators. The article does not report the results of an empirical survey, and the proposed model is offered as a basis for pilot testing and further validation.

4. Stakeholder Mapping and a Typology of Partners

The first practical step of the model is the identification of partners. Stakeholder mapping asks the manager to list all the groups that influence the work of the organization or are affected by it, to describe their interests and potential contributions, and to determine the level of priority [11, 12]. In a preschool organization the map normally contains several categories. Families are the primary partners and have the highest legitimacy, since the child's upbringing is first of all their responsibility. The founder and the public authorities define the regulatory conditions and provide support. Primary schools are the next educational stage and are interested in the readiness of children. Health and social services contribute to the protection of child health and the support of vulnerable families. Community institutions, including the neighborhood mahalla, provide social legitimacy and knowledge of local families. Business, civil-society organizations and higher education and training institutions can contribute resources, expertise and innovations. Table 1 presents the proposed typology.

Table 1. Typology of partners of a preschool education organization

Partner group	Typical interest	Possible contribution
Families	Development, safety and happiness of the child; transparent information	Participation in decisions, learning at home, volunteering, feedback



Partner group	Typical interest	Possible contribution
Founder and public authorities	Compliance, access, quality of services	Regulation, funding, supervision, methodological support
Primary schools	Readiness of children for school; continuity	Joint events, exchange of methods, transition programs
Health and social services	Prevention, early identification of risks	Health education, screening, consultations, support of vulnerable families
Mahalla and community institutions	Welfare of local families, social cohesion	Local knowledge, volunteers, facilities, events
Business and civil society	Social responsibility, reputation, social impact	Resources, expertise, public-private projects, educational programs
Training institutions and universities	Practice base, research, professional development	Training, consulting, research, student placements

After the partners are identified, they are prioritized. Partners with high legitimacy and urgency of claims, such as families, require continuous attention. Partners with high power over resources but a lower direct interest, for example some public bodies or business entities, require regular and targeted communication. Partners with lower power but potentially valuable contributions, such as volunteers and local experts, are engaged through project-based activities. This differentiated approach protects the organization from the spreading of effort across too many relations and focuses attention on those that are most important for the child.

5. The Management Cycle of Partnership

The core of the model is the cycle of partnership management, which consists of four phases repeated every academic year. Action teams of educators, parents and other participants are a feature of well-known frameworks for school, family and community partnership, and they are a practical form of organizing such a cycle [14]. In a preschool organization the role of such a team can be assumed by a partnership council coordinated by a designated deputy director or senior methodologist.

Phase 1. Diagnosis

The cycle starts with a diagnosis of the existing situation. The council collects information on the current partnerships and their results, surveys parents and staff about their needs and expectations, identifies the barriers for participation (working hours, distance, lack of



information, previous negative experience) and takes stock of the resources available in the community. The result of this phase is a short analytical note and an updated stakeholder map. A diagnosis made in dialogue with families and partners has a second function, as it is the first signal that the organization wants to listen.

Phase 2. Planning

On the basis of the diagnosis, the council formulates several priority goals for the year, no more than three or four, and designs the activities required for their achievement. For every activity the plan states the partner, the expected result, the responsible person, the resources needed, the deadlines and the indicator of success. The plan is aligned with the educational program and the development plan of the organization, so that partnership serves the educational aims. Agreements with partners are prepared at this stage and define reciprocal obligations. Following the principle of early small results, which is stressed in collaborative governance research [13], it is useful to include at least one visible and relatively simple activity in the first months of the cycle, because it increases confidence in the process.

Phase 3. Implementation

During the implementation phase the plan is carried out and monitored. The coordinator maintains regular contact with partners, helps to solve emerging problems and ensures communication with all participants. Special attention is paid to the quality of the experience of participants: whether events start on time, whether parents have an opportunity to speak, whether volunteers are given meaningful tasks and thanked for their work. Staff are supported through short training sessions and exchange of experience.

Phase 4. Review and renewal

At the end of the cycle the council analyzes the results against the indicators, collects the opinions of partners and families, and identifies what worked and what did not. The results are presented in a short annual report that is available to parents and partners, and the lessons are used for planning the next cycle. A particularly useful tool at this stage is a joint review meeting with the main partners, in which achievements are acknowledged and priorities for the next year are agreed. This phase completes the cycle and prevents partnership from becoming routine.

6. Family Engagement as the Core Strand of Partnership

Families are central partners, and engagement with them is the area in which a manager can gain the most. The research summarized above suggests five principles. The first principle is invitation: parents should feel that they are expected and valued, which requires personal contact, a friendly environment and clear explanation of how they can help [8]. The second principle is two-way communication. Information flows both from the organization to the family and from the family to the organization, and parents are treated as experts on their own child. The third is a focus on learning and development at home, in which the organization offers simple and practical ideas for play and conversation, since the quality of the home



learning environment has been shown to be an important factor of child outcomes alongside the quality of the preschool [15].

The fourth principle is dual capacity-building: staff are trained for respectful and effective communication, and families receive knowledge and confidence to support their children [10]. The fifth is inclusion. Participation formats should be diverse enough to enable all families to take part, including working parents, fathers and grandparents, families in vulnerable circumstances and families of children with special educational needs. In practice this means variable meeting times, online or messaging-based communication, short home-based tasks and a friendly attitude toward those who cannot attend. For the organization it is important not to confuse the number of events with the quality of engagement. A small number of well-prepared activities that respond to real needs usually has a greater effect than an extensive calendar of formal gatherings.

A special place in the engagement strategy is occupied by the parent council. To avoid tokenism, it should have a clear regulation, an agreed schedule of meetings and real consultative functions, for example participation in discussing the annual plan, the use of voluntary contributions and the evaluation of the quality of services. The practice of presenting to the council the results of decisions taken after its recommendations demonstrates that its voice matters and thus supports further participation.

7. Directions of Cross-Sector Cooperation

7.1. Health and social services

Early childhood development is influenced by health, nutrition, safety and responsive caregiving. The international nurturing care framework emphasizes that these components must be addressed together, and that services in different sectors should cooperate to support families [16]. For a preschool organization this means developing links with medical institutions and social services: health education for parents, consultations with specialists, cooperation in the early identification of developmental difficulties and the coordination of support for vulnerable families. Clear procedures for the exchange of information, with respect for privacy, are a necessary condition of such cooperation.

7.2. Primary schools and the transition to school

The transition to school is a critical stage for the child and the family. Research on transition emphasizes that continuity between settings, communication among teachers, parents and children, and attention to the readiness of schools as well as of children are key features of successful practice [17, 18]. Collections of research on the transition to kindergarten also highlight the role of relationships among children, families, teachers and schools [19]. In practice, a preschool organization can arrange visits of future first-graders to the school, joint events with primary teachers, workshops for parents on school readiness and exchange of information about the developmental dynamics of the child, taking into account the rules of data protection.



7.3. Community and mahalla

The community is a source of social capital, local knowledge and informal control that supports child safety. Cooperation with the mahalla may include joint events for families, the identification of families in need of support, mobilization of volunteers and the use of public spaces. It is important that cooperation be based on regular dialogue and mutually agreed plans, not on one-time requests. Representation of the mahalla in the partnership council institutionalizes this relationship.

7.4. Business, civil society and public-private partnership

Business and civil-society organizations can contribute resources, technologies, expertise and volunteers. The legislation on public-private partnership [20] establishes legal opportunities for engaging private partners in the social sphere, and organizations should study them carefully when planning projects that require substantial investment. At the level of an individual organization, however, many valuable forms of cooperation do not demand large budgets: master classes by professionals, excursions to workplaces, donations of materials for creative activities and expert support for the safety of the environment. Managers should make sure that cooperation with business remains consistent with the educational aims, is transparent and does not create commercial pressure on children or families.

7.5. Digital communication as an enabling tool

Digital tools do not create partnership by themselves, but they can lower the cost of communication and make participation easier for families who cannot attend events in person. Messaging groups for each age group, a simple page of the organization with regularly updated news, short video explanations of educational activities and online forms for feedback are examples of inexpensive instruments that can be introduced without special resources. Their use should be governed by clear rules agreed with parents: what kind of information is shared, at what times staff respond, how the photographs and personal data of children are protected, and how conflicts in group chats are prevented. A common mistake is to use digital channels only for announcements and instructions. Their value increases when they are used for dialogue, for example by inviting questions, collecting ideas for events and sharing simple suggestions for play at home. Managers should also remember that not all families have the same access to technology and digital skills, so digital formats should supplement, not replace, personal contact.

The cross-sector directions described above are not independent. A well-functioning partnership council makes it possible to coordinate them so that families do not receive contradictory messages from different institutions, partners do not duplicate each other's activities and the load on staff is balanced. For this reason it is useful to prepare a single calendar of partnership activities for the academic year, published for families and partners, and to review it at the council's regular meetings. A joint calendar also makes it easier to see which groups of children and families receive less attention and to redirect efforts accordingly.



8. The System of Performance Indicators

Evaluation is necessary for the improvement of partnership and for demonstrating its value. The proposed system includes indicators at three levels. Process indicators show whether the planned work is being carried out and who participates. Quality indicators show how participants evaluate the relationship. Outcome indicators show the effect on the educational environment and the child. The indicators are intentionally simple, so that they can be gathered by the staff of an ordinary organization without special equipment. Table 2 presents examples.

Table 2. Examples of indicators for evaluating social partnership

Level	Indicator	Data source
Process	Share of planned activities carried out; share of families participating at least once a year; fulfillment of agreed obligations by partners	Plan and attendance records; agreement review
Process	Diversity of participation formats (in person, online, home-based); representation of different family groups	Council records; participation log
Quality	Parent satisfaction and trust; perceived usefulness of activities; partner satisfaction with cooperation	Short surveys; interviews
Quality	Staff assessment of the support and clarity of partnership procedures	Staff survey; discussion in the team
Outcome	Number and variety of mobilized resources; improvement of the environment; continuity with primary school	Resource register; observation; feedback of schools
Outcome	Developmental dynamics of children in areas targeted by joint projects; home learning practices reported by parents	Pedagogical observation; parent reports

It should be emphasized that the indicators are intended as a means of learning, not as a basis for punishing staff. Their interpretation should be done in a dialogue involving staff, parents and partners. An important caution relates to the child outcome indicators: developmental changes depend on many factors, and causal conclusions about the effect of any single partnership activity should be made with great care. Large studies of preschool effectiveness show that child



outcomes are influenced simultaneously by the quality of the preschool, the home learning environment and the family background [15], so the indicators should be treated as informative signals, not as proof of cause.

9. Conditions of Implementation, Risks and the Role of Professional Development

Several conditions are needed for the model to work. The first is a shared leadership approach. If partnership depends only on the director, it is vulnerable, and for this reason it is important to engage the team and to build their professional capital through joint planning, mutual observation and reflection [21]. The establishment of a community of practice, in which educators of one or several organizations regularly exchange experience on working with families and partners, supports learning and the spreading of good practice [22]. The second condition is an enabling environment at the local level, including supportive attitudes of the founder and the local authorities and the participation of community institutions. The third is a basic culture of trust and respect, which is built slowly and can be lost quickly [9].

The main risks are as follows. Formalism arises when partnership is reduced to reports and signed documents. Overload appears when too many activities are planned without prioritization. Inequality of participation occurs when the most active families gain more benefits than the others. Dependence on individuals arises when contacts are personal rather than institutional. Dependence on a single partner or donor makes the organization vulnerable. Finally, there are ethical risks connected with data protection, the use of children's images and the possibility of commercial pressure. Prevention measures include a clear regulation of procedures, a limited number of priorities, diverse formats of participation, the documenting of agreements and transparent reporting.

The introduction of the model in practice depends on the competences of managers and specialists. The system of retraining and professional development of preschool directors has an important role to play. The content of programs should include the principles of stakeholder analysis, the design of the management cycle, the methods of communication with families, the development of institutional documents and the use of simple monitoring tools. The most effective methods are those that connect theory with practice: analysis of real cases, design of the partnership plan of one's own organization during the course, peer review by colleagues and follow-up support after training. A competent early childhood system, as described by Urban and colleagues, requires coherence among the levels of individual competences, team practice, institutional conditions and policy [23], and professional development is one of the ways in which this coherence can be achieved.

10. Conclusion

The article proposed a managerial model of social partnership for a preschool education organization. The model includes stakeholder mapping and a typology of partners, a four-phase annual cycle of diagnosis, planning, implementation and review, five principles of family engagement, four directions of cross-sector cooperation and a three-level system of performance



indicators. Its main idea is that effective partnership is a managed process in which clear responsibility, reciprocity, trust and evaluation are more important than the number of events.

The practical value of the model is that it can be used by managers of various types of organizations for self-assessment, planning and professional learning, and that it can be included in the content of programs of professional development of preschool directors. The limitations of the work are connected with its conceptual character. Directions for further research include the pilot implementation of the model in organizations of different types and regions, the validation of the indicators, the study of the link between the quality of partnership and children's outcomes, and the analysis of the possibilities of digital tools for communication and monitoring.

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